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The Dioscuri: We Hardly Know Them

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In this TRQ issue, I'm presenting the final two Dioscuri cards (see below). There are now six cards for both the Corp and the Runner side, almost all of which were created by Douglas Kaufman—since there were only five Runner cards in the Dioscuri submitted by him, I thought up a sixth Runner card myself: Check it out below.

Though it is only now that all the Dioscuri cards can be seen in context, the response to this design experiment has been rather underwhelming, which is a pity. Maybe it's because everybody is still coming to grips with *Classic*™? Please feel free to send your emails and express your thoughts now. Here are mine for a start. Basically, the idea behind the Dioscuri is sound: Create "factions" to encourage otherwise underused strategic approaches. We know this from quite a number of other TCGs (like **Legend of the Five Rings**™, **7th Sea**™ etc.), so there is no reason why it should not work for **Netrunner**™, too.

What I (still) see as a flaw (I'm repeating myself here), is that some of the Dioscuri come without any drawback. The Corp card below is a good example. Now, the premise was to draw the Dioscuri randomly in a Sealed-deck or Booster Draft environment, so that everybody was guaranteed to play with one. Given this, you'd have to make sure that even with such a limited card pool, each Dioscuri would make a difference. In that sense, if, for example, "Mu Nu Gamma" depends on Black Ops or Black Ice to even work, while "Paranoid Bob" works automatically and all the time, I can understand that designing a Dioscuri with only positive effects (and that is even *increasing* hand size to boot) might be a wise decision to counteract the more versatile Dioscuri. In this way, you could say that the Dioscuri are balanced against each other.

What doesn't work, however, is one player playing with a Dioscuri and the other without one. If the Dioscuri used has only positive effects, the player using it has an unfair advantage over his opponent. Consequently, when playing with Dioscuri cards, both players would have to use them to create a fair environment, and both players would have to prepare accordingly. This narrows down the opportunities for using the Dioscuri, which is bad, but as long as everybody is aware of the problem, we can live with it.

That said, I think that Sealed tournaments where Dioscuri were either randomly distributed or could be picked to match up with what you drew would be quite interesting, as would be a Constructed tournament where everybody could build decks beforehand around their favorite Dioscuri incarnation. Now that all twelve of them are available, tournament directors are more than welcome to organize such events (and to tell about their experiences). The card texts would have to be printed out as text (as of now, there is one laudable project of creating artwork for the Dioscuri on the Internet, but it is unfinished) and perhaps be inserted into card sleeves (with also cards in them) for randomization. I'll put a file with all twelve card texts on my website so that you can download it (cf. the Geocities address in the header).

One last remark: The names we have given the Dioscuri are working names only. If you have any better suggestions, please make them heard. And now: Have fun trying out the Dioscuri!

Jens Kreutzer (and Douglas Kaufman)

THE DIOSCURI (PART SIX)

Mu Nu Gamma – DIOSCURI—Corp

0: Discard a Black Ops or Black Ice card face-up into the Archives to either gain 3* or remove one Bad Publicity counter.

A, trash a rezzed piece of Black Ice: Gain 5* or remove four Bad Publicity counters.

Starting Hand: 6
Starting Bits: 5

Paranoid Bob, Ex-Combat Runner– DIOSCURI—Runner

At the start of each of your turns, for each installed unrevealed Corporation card, pay either 2* or forfeit your next action. Then, reveal all of these cards.

A: Reveal an installed Corporation card.

"Third Corporate War, Militech Special Ops. Used to tag along with the solo team. They hit the perimeter defense and the other Corp's solos; I hit the first terminal I could find. Then, they'd clear up meatspace resistance, I'd clear the 'Net. One day, damn sysops set me up. Liche nearly ate me up alive. Now, I always *look where I go. I'm not cannon fodder anymore, ya know?"*
—Paranoid Bob, Ex-Combat Runner

"Elementary, My Dear Wilson!" Famous Netrunner Stacks #13: Greyhound Demolition Derby

by Jens Kreutzer
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using material by Byron "Neal" Massey, with permission
with input by Richard Cripe and Lukas Kautzsch

"Children should not attempt to build or play this without adult supervision."
—Neal

In this article, we're going to take a look at one of the most famous heavy-caliber Tag'n'Bag-decks out there. It's also one of the most straightforward.

As you can read in the *Famous Stacks* installment of the 3/1999 TRQ issue, the basic premise of Tag'n'Bag is to tag Runners and then hit them with enough meat damage to flatline them. This is best done fast in order to catch opponents by surprise, and one card combination that was notorious in the infant days of **Netrunner**™ was playing Chance Observation/Urban Renewal in the second Corp turn.

But this approach depends on the Runner running during turn one, plus having no linkage, no tag or meat damage protection and not more than four cards in hand during the Corp's second turn—which is a lot of uncertainty to base a deck around. Since there are only four actions for the Runner to set up, this wouldn't be so bad, if it weren't for the fact that modern Constructed Runner stacks tend to draw lots and lots of cards. Bodyweight™ Synthetic Blood and Militech MRAM Chips are standard. Later in the game, circumspect Runners often install Emergency-Self Construct, which then spoils the party for any meat-damage strategy. Consequently, the "basic" Tag'n'Bag approach was seen less and less in tournaments up till 1998.

Into this Tag'n'Bag-lean metagame environment stepped Byron Massey (a.k.a. Neal). At the time, some really strong deck archetypes like Psycho Tycho and ASD/Corp War had already emerged, and—decklists being spread via the Internet—everybody and their friends were playing them. The same was true for the Runner side, with Precision Bribery/Time to Collect as the deck to beat, and bit engines like Bodyweight™ Synthetic Blood/Organ Donor/MIT West Tier or TagMe ruling the day. Neal was fed up with everybody just copying decks in his local Constructed tournaments, and one day, he made a conscious metagame decision to counter the ubiquitious TagMe and Bodyweight/Organ Donor stacks by bringing back the long-shunned Tag'n'Bag strategy. Only this time, it was Tag'n'Bag's elder brother: Greyhound Demolition Derby, published August 3, 1998.

Greyhound Demolition Derby

5	**Tycho Extension**
10	**City Surveillance**
8	**Schlaghund**
12	**Accounts Receivable**
8	**Manhunt**
2	**Project Consultants**

The main element is, and quite prominently so, Schlaghund. Eight copies ensure that one shows up in turn 1 or 2, and ten meat damage should take care of most Runners at that stage, eliminating Urban Renewal's shortcoming. Also, unlike I Got A Rock, which packs an even harder punch, Schlaghund doesn't need any agenda points to "work", which is good, since having to score agendas and turn-2 surprise kills don't really fit together. The concept is, literally, striking: Neal's deck features the most potent tag strategies available that punish card drawing (City Surveillance) and running (Manhunt), respectively, both capable of giving multiple tags at one go, which are very much needed by Schlaghund (ideally six). Then, he uses the tags to set off a Schlaghund as early as possible for the win, ideally before the Runners know what's hitting them, and before they can set up any defenses.

This is what Neal has to say about his approach:

"If you're wondering how to make this work (no ice!), here is the very brief explanation:

[First turn:]

1. Install a City Surveillance.
2. Play an Accounts Receivable.
3. We have some options. We can play another Accounts Receivable if we have one. We can also draw another card, or even take a single bit ('working in the mail room'). Installing a second City Surveillance is another great idea. We can even install a Schlaghund in anticipation of the kill, but it might get trashed.

"If the Runner makes a run on any fort, we can play Manhunt on the next turn and kill him with a Schlaghund. If the Runner doesn't run, they will almost certainly need to draw cards, and we should rez up the City Surveillance(s) when this happens. Typically, the Runner will run to trash the unprotected City Surveillance after paying a bit for each card drawn.

"On our second turn, we should:

1. Play a Manhunt with all but two of our bits.
2. Install (if we haven't already) and rez a Schlaghund.
3. Use it.

"There are all kinds of variations on how this works, but the effect is the same."

This deck takes its chances with being able to pull off what it attempts to do, and it might very well not be able to, but unlike with Chance Observation/Urban Renewal, it *does* have a real chance of working even (or especially so, because of the abundance of Bodyweight™ Synthetic Blood) in the Constructed environment.

Once again in Neal's words: "Is this deck unbeatable? No. The Runner will often die on the second turn, however, which leaves little time for a solution. The inspiration was to kill TagMe Runners with meat damage. The unfortunate side-effect was killing nearly everyone, nearly instantly."

There are three ways in which Demolition Derby may fail to operate as planned (apart from a really bad draw for the starting hand):

1. Not enough tags to set off Schlaghund reliably (and then having bad luck with the dice rolls).

2. Not being able to deliver the meat damage because of fast Runner defenses.
3. Failing to function because of early Runner disruption.

Let's address each of them in turn. First, tags. Of course, Neal designed Demolition Derby as a weapon against TagMe stacks, and if the Runner really happens to play one of those, this first point won't be much of a problem, though it isn't guaranteed that TagMe-Runners start off with Drone for a Day right in the first turn.

However, if the Runner doesn't play TagMe, it might be a little expensive to rez City Surveillance (1) plus Schlaghund (2) and still be able to play a Manhunt for six tags (10)—which would probably be neccessary, since most Runners will pay for City Surveillance rather than gain tags. This is no problem if the Corp played two Accounts Receivable in the first turn, but with just one (and taking a bit for the last action), 10 bits might not be enough to pull it off reliably in the second turn (and the third might be too late: Although the Runner will have a tough time removing the tags quickly, trashing Schlaghund or installing protection might be more feasible). Another danger is a Runner who neither runs nor draws cards during the first turn, though this should be a pretty rare occurrence.

Second, fast Runner defenses. While Demolition Derby has a good chance to outrun Emergency Self-Construct, the bane of all meat-damage strategies, another danger is Identity Donor, which finds its way into many a Runner stack. Especially in a Bad Publicity stack, Runners will have as many as four or even more copies, and unlike Emergency-Self Construct (which usually isn't included in great numbers), one might very well be in the starting hand or be drawn with the first Bodyweight™ Synthetic Blood.

In comparison to other meat-damage approaches (such as Corporate Headhunters) that break down their deadly damage load into smaller units, an all-or-nothing heavy hitter like Schlaghund is especially vulnerable to Identity Donor. Other Runner defenses exist, such as Full-Body Conversion, an untrashed Wilson or a good link, but the two discussed above seem to be the most problematic ones.

Third, early Runner disruption. Neal mentioned some Runner strategies that might be disruptive to Demolition Derby:

"Precision Bribery/Time to Collect could be difficult to beat, depending on the steel nerves of the Runner, who must decide how much he believes in Time to Collect as a way to protect his many resources (assuming he takes the City Surveillance tags). A first-turn Credit Subversion or Weather-to-Finance Pipe would also stop the second-turn kill (assuming the Corp hadn't played two Accounts Receivable on its first turn)."

While Precision Bribery/Time to Collect has fortunately lost its sting since then, attacking the Corp's bit supply is still a very viable Runner strategy. In the case of Demolition Derby, this is aggravated by the iceless nature of the deck: HQ is wide open for any kind of disruption.

As was shown above, the deck is indeed beatable, but quite a lot of Runners will find it difficult to survive longer than one or two turns against it. Neal sums it up: "It's scary to see how many [Runner] options this rare-laden monstrosity takes away".

That brings us to another aspect of Greyhound Demolition Derby: 18 out of its 45 cards are rares that are very hard to get, since every **Netrunner** player wants them in multiples. Unfortunately, there are no real substitutes for City Surveillance and Schlaghund, and that means that only a few players will be able to build the deck at all—but on the other hand, even "card lords" with ten copies of each card might balk at the gamble that lies at the heart of this deck strategy. Consequently, it won't be seen that often at tournaments, and therefore it can still surprise opponents (even if they know all about Demolition Derby)—which in turn will often lead to their messy demises.

If you can build it, I'd like to encourage you to try it out at tournaments now and then. Tag'n'Bag is an integral part of **Netrunner**, and Runners must be prepared to deal with it—to keep them on their toes, we could do with some more tagging and bagging in tournaments. Though it's hard to win with Demolition Derby once the Runner knows what the Corp is up to, the Corp will likely never lose with this strategy because of a game being called for time.

Neal picked Tycho Extension as his agenda of choice, which allowed him a lean card-agenda ratio in his deck and opened up (in combination with Project Consultants) an alternative way of winning by fast-advance. It's good to have this backup plan, but since Tycho Extension is banned in the Revised Constructed format, the original Greyhound Demolition Derby needs some modifications.

Being a frequent choice of Tag'n'Bag players, Political Overthrow offers itself as a substitute. Winning by fast-advancing two Overthrows won't be feasible anyway, and so we might as well drop the Project Consultants. This in turn leaves room for four other cards. These slots can be filled by additional Accounts Receivable, Schlaghund, City Surveillance or Manhunt, but *Classic*'s Shock Treatment, which wasn't around when Demolition Derby was created, is another consideration. With Shock Treatment, the Corp can trash an installed Emergency Self-Construct and clear the way for the hounds.

Greyhound Shocker Derby

3	**Political Overthrow**
10	**City Surveillance**
8	**Schlaghund**
13	**Accounts Receivable**
9	**Manhunt**
2	**Shock Treatment**

Another card that might have the same effect is Badtimes—Lukas Kautzsch has experimented with this, but since just one Badtimes won't do the job, Shock Treatment is arguably the better choice, even though it is trashable. Of course, playing the deck without either of the two is just as fine: Another strategy, also suggested by Lukas, is putting in four Blood Cats as a nice surprise for Runners who don't run at all (Faked Hit) or only in their final action (Big Dig)—they tend to just pay for City Surveillance and dodge the tags.

Richard Cripe has suggested another way of adapting Demolition Derby to Revised Constructed rules:

GreyOps Demolition Derby

6 Employee Empowerment
9 City Surveillance
8 Schlaghund
11 Accounts Receivable
8 Manhunt
3 Project Consultants

Just like Psycho Tycho substituted Employee Empowerment when Tycho Extension was banned in Revised, Richard recommends keeping the fast-advance strategy, albeit in a lesser incarnation (since you must now score three agendas to win). Here are his comments: “The main focus is still to kill the Runner. If you can’t, then it’s a race to see who can score the agendas faster. The only way to win that race is to out-draw the Runner. Employee Empowerment is the easiest way to attain this. It’s not as good as the Tycho version, but it’s a solution. The main vulnerability to this deck is a Runner who has Emergency Self-Construct and a virus setup, particularly Highlighter, Viral Pipeline, or Taxman. It’s probably not worth it to put in cards to prepare for this strategy; just hope to win before this gets set up.”

Concluding, Greyhound Demolition Derby is a classic that is going to stay, even after **Netrunner** *Classic*—but because of the many rares needed for building it and its risky strategy, it will only ever be a threat that looms in the (metagame) background of Constructed tournaments, to strike at unexpected moments (unless you’re playing Neal, Lukas, or Richard, of course). At such times, a wise Runner had better be prepared for the Schlag-hounds.

Deck Hardware in *Netrunner*

-Feature Articles-

by Jens Kreutzer and Muneki Tada

Always looking for material to publish in the TRQ, I couldn’t help noticing that the Japanese ***Netrunner*** *players tend to write a lot about their favorite game. This is partly due to the fact that some players take the time and effort to translate rules and card texts into Japanese and write some clarifications to go with them, in order to help their friends who are perhaps not that much at home with the English language, but it can also be attributed to a lot of creative energy that sides right alongside with that of the prolific French community. You might not know, but there are (amateur) softcover publications (with manga art covers) that are in one league with the legendary French “cyberbible”. There is also some online material in the ‘Net, and to make some of that available to the general public, I’ve translated and edited an article by Muneki Tada (Regional AI Japan) on Deck Hardware, and written some general comments myself as an introduction. These feature articles are geared towards beginners, but maybe experienced players will find two or three bits of interest as well. Enjoy.*

On Decks

by Jens Kreutzer
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In this article, I’d like to make some general remarks on the role of Decks (as in the type of Hardware Runner cards) in **Netrunner**. Most of these insights were formulated in a discussion I had with Neal (I think), so credits are partly due to him.

Well, talking of Decks, the one burning question must be: Why is almost nobody playing them? There are of course some notable exceptions, like Bodyweight™ Data Crèche and The Deck, but these have some very unique abilities (see Muneki’s article below) and are not representative of Decks in general.

The basic design concept behind the more typical Decks is the amalgamation of several abilities into one card. Take Raven Microcyb Owl, for example. For 11 bits, an action and a card, you get +1 MU and 3 Stealth bits. This is the same effect as a WuTech Mem Chip and a Cloak would give you. Installing WuTech and Cloak costs only 8 bits, but you have to figure the additional installing action, the additional card and the additional MU (to hold Cloak) into the equation. If an action, a card, and an MU equal 1 bit each (which is cheap for MU), the equation makes sense. Somehow, that is.

There is one big design problem with Decks. The designers must have thought that it is a great benefit to have several abilities slipped into one card—after all, it slims your stack down. But this comes at a stiff price. It is always painful for the Runner to invest a lot of bits at one go, because ideally, he or she needs to have some reserves in the pool at all times, in order to be able to threaten a run. Therefore, most of the time, Runners want fast, cheap and focused solutions to their immediate problems.

Long-term investments might not yield any returns at all in **Netrunner**, since the game might always end in the next turn. This is especially true in the cutthroat environment of Constructed tournaments. What this means is that, if Runners need MU, they want a WuTech or an Imp, but not Raven Microcyb Owl. If they need hand size, they want MRAM Chips, not Sunburst Cranial Interface. If they want Stealth bits, they will install Cloaks with Valu-Pak Software Bundle and lots of Zetatech Software Installers, rather than Raven Microcyb Owl. If they want a really good link value for free, they’ll install—ok, they’ll install The Deck, but you get the idea.

Therefore, what the designers envisioned as “versatile” or “lean”, with the appropriate pricing policy, turned out to be “unfocused” in the end, and Decks would have to be not more expensive than the individual cards whose abilities they combine, but of the same cost, in order to make them playable. Maybe they should even be cheaper, since Decks have the additional restriction that only one can be in play at any one time. That it didn’t work out that way is a pity, since storywise it makes great sense for the Runner to crave the latest Deck technology for that tiny edge on the Corp ice.

In the following article, Muneki takes a shot at classifying the various Decks of ***Netrunner****.*

A Beginners’s Guide to Deck Hardware

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(translated from the Japanese & edited by Jens Kreutzer)

Constituting a distinct subtype of Hardware, there are a lot of cards in **Netrunner** with the Keyword “Deck” written on them. Their defining characteristic is that no two decks can ever be

in play at the same time: Other than the Deck that was most recently installed, all other Decks automatically trash themselves. Another common point is that all Decks combine multiple abilities of various kinds; it is only the benefit of granting additional MU that is shared by all Decks.

Since there can never be more than one Deck in play at a time, I think that in Constructed play, Runners will almost never want to put more than one type of Deck into their stacks. Though on rare occasions, Runners might want to put in a variety of different Decks so that they might better react to the strategy of the Corp they are facing, it mostly boils down to the Runner looking for a Deck that fits his or her own strategy best and then putting in one or two copies of that Deck only. As often as not, it will turn out in the end that no Deck at all finds its way into the stack in question.

In this article, I'm going to compare the various abilities of the individual Decks in an uncomplicated way, and if this helps you to choose the right Deck for your stack, I will be glad. For this purpose, I've tried to group all Decks into five categories, namely General Purpose, Anti-Trace, Run Support, Heavyweight, and Special. Of course, others might choose different categories for their analysis, or might debate whether a certain Deck should rather belong to another category, but please bear with me.

General Purpose

I have included those cards into this category which combine three or more abilities and are comparatively cheap to install. The line for installation costs was drawn at 6 bits. There is no theoretical basis for this; it is just because there are no Decks in the 7-9 bit range. Most cards that belong to this category are not very picky about Runner strategies with which they work well. Especially Little Black Box is just an excellent addition to about every Runner stack. In fact, if you're considering to put a Deck into your stack, I think it's a good idea to measure it against the merits of Little Black Box first.

1. Raven Microcyb Eagle

Among the three General Purpose Decks, this is the only one that doesn't increase hand size, and with its installation cost of 6, it finds itself on the expensive side of the spectrum to boot. While one gets the feeling that the benefits it grants are not really up to par in comparison with the other two Decks, the fact that the bit it provides for icebreaking can be used with noisy 'breakers as well prevents it from being completely worthless. Further, the Net damage prevention helps against some of the pain inflicted by Setup! or TRAP!. In a stack that needs to spend bits for running, and that intends to make comparatively many runs, or for a player who tends to favor this play style, you could say that among the General Purpose Decks, this card also has its niche.

2. Sunburst Cranial Interface

Before the advent of Little Black Box, this card would have been considered the general-purpose Deck with the most appeal. Even today, its abilities can still measure up to Little Black Box. Especially if you compare Cranial's Stealth bit with Box's linkage bit, you'll find that you will get much more mileage out of the former. Even if you rely on noisy 'breakers in your stack, you can still use the Stealth bit as long as the outermost ice of the assaulted fort isn't a wall. Further, because it is Cybernetics and increases hand size, Cranial is a card that is comparatively strong against a tagging strategy. Though when compared with Little Black Box, Cranial seems to lose out a bit in terms of general power level, it can be said that it is the more aggressive Deck of the two. Plus, since it's common while Box is rare, it is also easier to get.

3. Little Black Box

This card from the *Classic* expansion has a cheap installation cost, but boasts four abilities, which is the maximum among all Decks. Although you could argue that is it in a way half-baked because all of the abilities are rather weak, if you compare it with other Decks that give +1 MU and prevent one brain damage, it becomes clear that at this cost, it really packs a punch. Whenever you are building a new stack and cannot find a Deck that fits your strategy, and you still have some card slots to fill, just try putting in Little Black Box and you probably won't be disappointed with its performance.

Anti-Trace

Those Decks with the ability to defend against traces (especially traces with low trace value) fall into my "Anti-Trace" category. Especially The Deck and Techtronica™ Utility Suit will allow the Runner to thwart trace attempts almost completely.

4. The Deck

Together with Access through Alpha, this is the most powerful base link in the game. With this card, Runners can make it almost impossible for the Corp to trace them. But since The Deck only grants +1 MU apart from this ability, and since its installation cost is pretty steep, it isn't worthwhile to put it into each and every Runner stack. However, if the Runner needs to protect many sensitive Resources (like Loan From Chiba), or if the local metagame has many Corps that use a lot of tracing, it is a really good idea to use this card. For other cases, there are many other (and cheaper) ways of tag prevention.

5. Techtronica™ Utility Suit

This Deck prevents one meat damage and provides 5 bits per turn to be spent on increasing a base link. With these bits and a base link like Baedeker's Net Map, you could prevent a full-fledged Manhunt from taking effect each turn. Though no The Deck, Utility Suit is a very strong defense against tracing (and Tag'n'Bag in general). Since it is much cheaper to install than The Deck, it could be said that Utiliy Suit lends itself to becoming an easy way out of getting traced, if that is your problem. Perhaps it could see some play as a backup option (together with an alternative Deck in the stack or just by itself), to be installed only when facing a trace-heavy Corp.

6. Pandora's Deck

This one gives the Runner +2 MU and 3 bits for increasing link value. If you want linkage bits while going about extending your memory, Pandora's Deck will do the job. I think that in Sealed deck play, the 2 MU are really useful, so you might consider putting it in.

7. PK-6089a

PK-6089a doesn't at all compare with the power of The Deck or Utility Suit. It seems to be a dimished version of Pandora's Deck with regard to installation cost (which is cheap), and power level as well. Even if thought of as a substitute for situations in which neither Utility Suit nor Pandora's Deck are available, PK-6089a is rather hopeless. Only when viewed from the perspective of its low installation cost is there any reason to consider playing with it.

Run Support

Cards that increase MU and provide self-renewing bits for icebreaking or other benefits for runs, but have no more than two abilities, fall into this category.

8. Parraline 5750

For convenience's sake, I put Parraline into this category, but it must be admitted that it isn't a very potent card. The installation cost in itself is not that expensive, but it is hard to say whether the Deck really delivers anything for the buck. Because it supplies a bit that can be used by noisy icebreakers and is a common card, it can perhaps be thought as a Deck that might see some action in a Sealed tournament.

9. Bodyweight™ Data Crèche

This is the Deck with the lowest installation cost. Its effect of enabling additional runs is a very special ability. But this ability comes into play only right after a succesful run was made. This means that if the Runner stack doesn't provide large amounts of bits for running, or isn't specifically built to allow runs that don't cost any bits, Bodyweight™ Data Crèche won't have any efficient function. As long as the Runner strategy allows Bodyweight™ Data Crèche to be applied to some effect, the ability to grant additional runs is of great worth indeed. That is because you could argue that the Runner gains additional actions, even though technically, the additional runs don't actually count as actions. You cannot say that this Deck is an effective addition to every Runner stack out there, but it definitely has great potential.

Heavyweight

These are Decks that cost 10 or more bits to install. Though they have appropiate powers to go with the cost, you cannot help thinking that there aren't many opportunities for putting them to good use. Should you consider putting one of these into your stack anyway, you probably would never want to choose anything else than Cortical Cybermodem. That is because among these four Decks, Cortical Cybermodem is head and shoulders above the rest in terms of power level.

10. Raven Microcyb Owl

Providing 3 Stealth bits is an excellent ability, but in this case, it really doesn't justify the extravagant installation cost of this Deck. If you think about it, Stealth programs or other Stealth Decks, or a combination thereof, will prove to be a better option than Raven Microcyb Owl. Having to anxiously wait for an opportunity (and the spare bits) to install this monstrosity during a game is something a Runner can do without.

11. Cortical Cybermodem

This is the only Deck that gives a +2 hand size increase. Because of its other abilities of providing 2 MU and 2 bits per turn for icebreaking, it represents a well-rounded and pretty potent card, as long as you don't think too much about its installation cost. But this very installation cost of 11 bits makes it hard for the Runner to actually let this potential come to fruition. If you want the selfsame abilities Cortical Cybermodem provides from other cards, you'll need the triad of Tycho Mem Chip (5 bits, +3 MU), MRAM Chip (1 bit, +2 hand size), and Vewy Vewy Quiet (4 bits, 2 Stealth bits, needs 1 extra MU). Unlike the Cortical bits, Vewy Vewy Quiet bits are Stealth bits, though. So if you plan on using these three cards anyway, Cortical Cybermodem might be of some value, but if you keep the abilities split up into the three cards listed above, you can install them one at a time, which leaves more room for adapting your play to the present situation than the installation of Cortical Cybermodem. If you have the bits to spare, you might think about including it in your stack, but it lets the Runner really sweat it out until it is finally installed.

12. Arasaka Portable Prototype

This is the only Deck that has an agenda point as part of its installation cost. Now, if it were an agenda point only, it would be a powerful card. But with the 11 bits that are needed in addition to the agenda point, this high cost casts serious doubts on the usefulness of Arasaka Portable Prototype. In fact, it is one of the worst cards in the entire game, and it is next to impossible to think of a situation in which you'd prefer it over Cortical Cybermodem (perhaps in a Bad Publicity stack?—nah, not really).

13. Artemis 2020

If you compare it with Cortical Cybermodem, Artemis 2020 is one bit cheaper to install, but it lacks Cybermodem's +2 hand-size increase. If you're thinking about using this card, it's probably a better deal to take Cortical Cybermodem instead.

Special

This category might have been dubbed "The Rest" just as well, but this last Deck has indeed a pretty special "ability":

14. Omnitech "Spinal Tap" Cybermodem

Rather than providing a unique benefit, this Deck is characterized by the possibility of dealing damage, which can be considered a part of its cost. Because of the random brain damage that may befall the Runner, if this Deck is to be used, he or she will need to construct a stack that can deal with this damage. But if you think about the possibility of receiving two brain damage each turn, you really need some guts to install Omnitech "Spinal Tap" Cybermodem in the first place. Perhaps it fits into a strategy that uses other "suicidal" cards like Quest for Cattekin or Lucidrine™ Booster Drug.

The French Open 2002

by Yannick Mescam
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(translated from the French by Jens Kreutzer)

The Paris Open Netrunner tournament (Open de Netrunner de Paris) was held at the weekend of May 4-5, 2002, at Ostelen Game Center. This tournament was characterized by two novelties:

- In the Sealed tournament, each player started out with just one Starter deck, but before each of the following rounds, one booster was added to the card mix ("Incremental Boosters").
- In the Constructed tournament, Neal's Draconian Banned list was in effect (meaning that 60 cards each of the Corp and Runner sides are banned, mainly card drawing for the Runner and fast-advancement for the Corp).

First day: Sealed

Eleven players showed up for the first round of the tournament, among them Belgian Gilles Delcourt and a newcomer (Jean-François Cataldo). I had a double advantage in this format because for one, my Starter wasn't bad, but even more so because I got the bye in the first round, which allowed me to play my first match with a Starter and one booster. The "Incremental Boosters" format was very interesting, since it allows the players to change their

decks in between rounds, in some cases adopting a completely different strategic approach ("Oh look, there are at last the two bagging cards I needed to go along with my six taggers!").

Sealed results:
1. Yannick Mescam
2. Olivier Flament
3. Ali Hamra
4. Caroline Croizier
5. Remy Berenguer
6. François Chenebit
7. Bastien Durel
8. Gilles Delcourt
9. Patrice Gross
10. Frederic Garnier
11. Jean-François Cataldo

Second day: Constructed
Only five players returned for another day to play the next round on Sunday (some had to go to attend elections in the country, while others were really put off by the format), but two new players joined as reinforcements. The decks that were played had a lot of variation, but one old favorite was well represented: the Rent-to-Own strategy. Among the other Corp decks, we had a Corporate Negotiating Center/Setup!/TRAP! deck ("Go and search for my agendas in my hand if you dare!"), a wall deck, and a Rockerboy Promotion/Corporate Guard Temps deck (At one time, Frederic Chorein drew only Rockerboys and decided to install and empty them all for a 13-turn Corporate Guards!). This last card was frequently used as a replacement for the usual fast-advancement cards.

The Runners mainly set their bets on a Mystery Box strategy, but there were also adherents to "normal" card drawing who used Cruising for Netwatch, and two Big Dig stacks with a Lucidrine™ Booster Drug/Liberated Saving Accounts combo to fuel the machine. Gilles Delcourt won this round (and the tournament) thanks to two robust decks:

Corp: Panzer Division

14	**Colonel Failure**
14	**Rent-to-Own Contract**
3	**Superserum**
3	**Marine Arcology**
2	**Corporate Downsizing**
4	**Vapor Ops**
4	**Rio de Janeiro City Grid**

Runner: The Best Things Are Free

6	**Mystery Box**
4	**Joan of Arc**
3	**Codecracker**
2	**Worm**
1	**Japanese Water Torture**
3	**Redecorator**
1	**Dropp™**
8	**Succubus**
5	**Cloak**
7	**Clown**
1	**Shredder Uplink Protocol**
1	**Bakdoor™**
1	**Cascade**
1	**Crumble**
1	**Force Shield**

His choice of Japanese Water Torture paid off versus Patrice Gross' wall deck, who had his forts heavily fortified with Aardvark and London City Grid.

Constructed results:
1. Gilles Delcourt
2. Bastien Durel
3. Yannick Mescam
4. Frederic Andres
5. Frederic Garnier
6. Frederic Chorein
7. Patrice Gross

And finally…
The new champion of the Paris Open 2002 is Gilles Delcourt. Though his Sealed performance was rather disappointing, his Constructed decks tended to dominate the others. Congratulations to Gilles, and please come to the next tournament, the French Nationals in November 2002.

Combined results:
1. Gilles Delcourt
2. Yannick Mescam
3. Bastien Durel
4. Patrice Gross
5. Frederic Garnier
6. Olivier Flament
7. Ali Hamra
8. Caroline Croizier
9. Remy Berenguer
10. François Chenebit
11. Frederic Andres
12. Frederic Chorein
13. Jean-François Cataldo

Did You Know?
Bits and Pieces from the NR Trivia Collection
#13: HQ Interface and R&D Interface

by Jens Kreutzer
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Arguably the two most basic multi-access cards for the Runner, R&D Interface and HQ Interface share a lot of features: Both are of course "Interfaces" and Hardware, have a similar ability and the same installation cost, but the most interesting bit about them is perhaps their card-spanning flavor text, which starts on R&D Interface and is continued on HQ Interface:

"I have a friend in Oaxaca who sells to Ops in Cuernavaca who supply a tech at Arasaka ... from Arasaka to Cuernavaca to Oaxaca—to me the gear does come."

Now, Oaxaca and Cuernavaca are cities in Mexico, while Arasaka is a ruthless corporation in the **Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.**™ world (which was used as the background for **Netrunner**). But to understand the joke, you must know that this flavor text is a reference to a song by

Tom Lehrer (born 1928), an American singer-songwriter who is famous for his satirical and humorous compositions. Mainly active during the 1950s and 60s, his songs have always been somewhat controversial. The following are the lyrics of the song *Lobachevsky* (from the album *Tom Lehrer Revisited*, 1959):

Lobachevsky

Who made me the genius I am today,
The mathematician that others all quote?
Who's the professor that made me that way,
The greatest that ever got chalk on his coat?

One man deserves the credit,
One man deserves the blame,
and Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name. Oy!
Nicolai Ivanovich Lobache...

I am never forget the day I first meet the great Lobachevsky.
In one word he told me secret of success in mathematics: Plagiarize!

Plagiarize,
Let no one else's work evade your eyes,
Remember why the good Lord made your eyes,
So don't shade your eyes,
But plagiarize, plagiarize, plagiarize...
Only be sure always to call it please, "*research*".

And ever since I meet this man my life is not the same,
And Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name. Oy!
Nicolai Ivanovich Lobache...

I am never forget the day I am given first original paper to write.
It was on Analytic and Algebraic Topology of Locally Euclidean Metrization of Infinitely Differentiable Riemannian Manifold.
Bozhe moi! This I know from nothing.
But I think of great Lobachevsky and I get idea—haha!

I have a friend in Minsk,
Who has a friend in Pinsk,
Whose friend in Omsk
Has friend in Tomsk
With friend in Akmolinsk.
His friend in Alexandrovsk
Has friend in Petropavlovsk,
Whose friend somehow
Is solving now
The problem in Dnepropetrovsk.

And when his work is done—
Haha!—begins the fun.
From Dnepropetrovsk
To Petropavlovsk,
By way of Iliysk,
And Novorossiysk,
To Alexandrovsk to Akmolinsk
To Tomsk to Omsk
To Pinsk to Minsk
To me the news will run,
Yes, to me the news will run!

And then I write
By morning, night,
And afternoon,
And pretty soon
My name in Dnepropetrovsk is cursed,
When he finds out I published first!

And who made me a big success
And brought me wealth and fame?
Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name. Oy!
Nicolai Ivanovich Lobache...

I am never forget the day my first book is published.
Every chapter I stole from somewhere else.
Index I copy from old Vladivostok telephone directory.
This book, this book was sensational!
Pravda—ah, Pravda—Pravda said:
"Jeel beel kara ogoday blyum blocha jeli," ("It stinks").
But Izvestia! Izvestia said:
"Jai, do gudoo sun sai pere shcum," ("It stinks").
Metro-Goldwyn-Moskva bought the movie rights for six million rubles,
Changing title to "The Eternal Triangle",
With Brigitte Bardot playing part of hypotenuse.

And who deserves the credit?
And who deserves the blame?
Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky is his name. Oy!

This song is a humorous take on plagiarism in the world of science, and the reference fits really well, since plagiarism (i. e., theft of data in a broad sense) is just what the Runner does for a living (and he or she does it even better with an R&D Interface installed). Note also the parallelism of *research* in the song and *R&D* (short for Research & Development) on the card. Incidentally, Nicolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky (1793-1856) was a real Russian mathematician, mainly famous for his achievements in the field of geometry. As the album *Tom Lehrer Revisited* has since been republished on CD, why not listen to some Tom Lehrer while making that HQ run next time?

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